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ABSTRACT

This publication contains a brief description of secondary education in Poland. The first section provides an overview of the societal and political context in which the educational system exists. The second section discusses current educational issues, including policy formation, finance, the school role in the community, administration and organization, curriculum, evaluation and assessment, school staff, and Poland's relationship to the rest of Europe. Issues pertaining to educational efficiency and performance are discussed in the third section, with a focus on university enrollments and the need to reform vocational schools. The fourth section includes challenges, problems, and prospects, which include the promotion of foreign-language teaching, the modernization of teacher training, changes in syllabi, and the transformation of vocational training. One figure is included. The appendix contain 9 tables of educational statistics. (LMI)

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Secondary education in Poland

Council of Europe Press

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Secondary education in Poland

by Rafal Piwowarski

Guide to secondary education in Europe
Editor Denis Kallen

A secondary education for Europe
Council for Cultural Co-operation

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The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has thirty-eight member states,[1] including the fifteen members of the European Union. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary grouping in Europe, and has its headquarters in the French city of Strasbourg.

Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth, health, environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, forty-four states have acceded to the European Cultural Convention; the Council of Europe's full member states plus Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Holy See, Monaco and Russia.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation** (the CDCC) is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on education and culture. Four specialised committees – the Education Committee, the Standing Conference on University Problems, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee – help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the regular conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three overarching policy objectives for the 1990s:

- the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;

- the promotion of an awareness of European identity;

1. Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom

– the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, there are projects on: education for democratic values; history; modern languages; school links and exchanges; the reform of secondary education; access to higher education; the reform of legislation on higher education in central and eastern Europe; academic mobility; and educational documentation and research.

In 1991, the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe launched a project entitled "A secondary education for Europe". The aims of the project are to:

– give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to meet the major challenges of European society;

– prepare young people for higher education, and for mobility, work and daily life in a multilingual and multicultural, democratic Europe;

– make young people aware of their common cultural heritage and their shared responsibilities as Europeans.

This project has two elements: the first devoted to reflections and consultations among the member states on the overall policies and strategies, and the second on the European dimension in the school curriculum.

The series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" sets out to present in a synthetic form – country by country – the major elements of secondary education structures and policies that exist in CDCC member states.

Each guide has been written, on the basis of a common analysis, by experts designated by the authorities in each country concerned.

Denis Kallen has undertaken the difficult task of the general co-ordination of this series, guaranteeing its coherence and thus allowing comparisons to be made among countries.

Given that this is a field in which developments sometimes take place very quickly and are of an almost permanent nature, it is possible that, despite the considerable efforts made to take into account the latest reforms in the pipeline, certain changes may have taken place since the manuscript was originally received.

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I. The societal and political context

When describing the Polish education system in general terms, it is necessary to state that, in the past, it was heavily state-controlled and entirely subjugated to Marxist-Leninist ideology.

State control was reflected in a centrally designed syllabus, in the ministerial monopoly over textbook production, and in the laying down of strict requirements for teachers and other educational staff. In fact, teachers in the classroom had room for manœuvre in their choice of methods, but hardly any in the content of their teaching.

Another typical feature of the Polish system was the limited involvement of parents and the local community in school life. On the rare occasions it did occur it was limited to the problems of the material well-being of schools, and did not affect the syllabus and the contents of learning. For many years the development of general secondary schools was curbed, the learning of foreign languages was reduced and young people of the working class were led into a cultural cul-de-sac, namely, basic vocational schools. There was wide-scale destruction of the school network in the country; the educational (Communist Party) authorities decided, at the end of the first half of the 1970s, on a concentration of the rural school network because there were too many small schools. There were good reasons for the decision, but it was carried out without any preparation and in a mechanical way. Many schools that had existed for many years, some of them built by the farmers, peasents themselves, simply disappeared. Many teachers from these closed-down small schools left the teaching profession because they had lost their special allowances for work at a small school. Some researchers, educational experts as well as economists, consider that the expenditure on education in the 1970s was reduced to the level of a non-developed, poor country, and at any rate far below the level of so-called "educational death".

The same constraining model of controlling education prevailed in the 1980s. The first parliamentary bill under martial law was "Teachers: Charter of Rights". It granted many unexpected benefits to teachers (a shorter working week and less working hours, early retirement and the right to become a cer-

tified teacher after two years of work). As a result, in the second half of the 1980s, schools employed more than 100 000 teachers with no proper qualifications. They cannot now be dismissed as they have become "certified teachers". The overwhelming majority of them started to work in rural areas, where the shortage of teachers was greatest. Some of them became certified teachers before they had completed their in-service training courses. Some of them went on to gain other certificates. However, today, most of them have only secondary education plus some pedagogical training. These inopportune social privileges given to teachers in order to secure their loyalty to the martial law authorities cannot be taken back today.

The main problem, however, is the way teachers think; they are, in general, not able and not willing to use the freedom of thought and action that they have now been given. "Proletarian" teachers will not automatically become creative individuals involved in the democratic transformation of society (the strikes by teachers in May 1993 confirm this hypothesis). Another great obstacle to progress is the poverty of the school system, which has worsened with the years.

The Polish secondary education system within the last ten years can also be characterised as follows:

– only about 40%-45% of primary school-leavers have completed full secondary education and thus become eligible for university studies (in 1991, the figure was 51,2%);

– there was – and still is – an extensive system of three-year basic vocational schools that did not provide full secondary education certificates and offered a very narrow vocational training without a solid theoretical framework. In about 1970, 50% of the primary school-leavers attended this type of schools but their part in overall secondary enrolments has, in the past few years, rapidly decreased and it has now fallen below the 40% level;

– there has been a decline in educational aspirations, reflected by the fall in numbers of those wanting to enrol in higher education. This was connected with the poor financial situation of the better-educated: gaining knowledge was not a profitable investment. This decline has, however, not affected enrolments in secondary education because there is no tradition of starting work early (at 15 or 16).

The present constitutional and legal foundations for education were strongly influenced by the Solidarity period (1980-81), by the "round table" negotia-

tions with communists in spring 1989, and finally given shape in the Polish Educational Act of 1991. The act states that "school duty" (unchanged since 1961) starts when the child reaches 7 years of age and lasts until the end of primary school, that is, for eight years, but not longer than the school year in which the pupil becomes 17. Secondary education is not obligatory.

In recent years – and still today – about 94% to 97% of primary school-leavers continue their education at secondary schools (information on primary education and its curriculum can be found in Chapter II, section 6 and also in the appendix).

In Poland, secondary education is usually called "middle" or "intermediary" ("in-between" primary and higher education). It comprises three types of schools: general (four years) and technical (four to five years) secondary schools and, thirdly, basic (elementary) vocational schools (three years). The term "full secondary school" is used in this guide to designate a secondary school where a maturity certificate can be obtained, granting eligibility for higher education.

Demography and educational developments

After the second world war, demographic developments in Poland have strongly influenced its education system. There have been great demographic waves: the number of live births decreased from 783 000 in 1951 to 520 000 in 1967. The number rose to 723 000 in 1983, but fell to 516 000 in 1992 and 493 000 in 1993 (see *Recent Demographic Developments in Europe - 1993*, Council of Europe, 1994). In the next few years, the number of births is expected to further decrease until the generation of the demographic boom of the early 1980s starts procreating, that is, early in the twenty-first century. The present consequences of these demographic influences differ, of course, according to age-groups. The number of children aged 3 to 6 (kindergarten age) is now, after the peak at the end of the 1980s, decreasing. At the end of the 1990s, this population is, however, expected to start growing gradually again. The size of the primary school population (7 to 14 years) reached a peak in 1990 and will remain stable until, at least, 1995. But after 1995 and at least until the year 2000, the number of children in this group will be smaller than it was in 1990. The number of youths aged 15 to 18 will remain stable until the year 2000 but after that will fall rather rapidly. The increase in size of this age-group as well as the earlier growth in the population between 7 and 14 years of age will determine the main needs of the education system in the coming years. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, it was particularly difficult for primary schools, as

they had to cater for the largest groups of children. Similarly, the last years of the twentieth century will be especially difficult for secondary schools since they will have to cater for the largest groups of 15-year-olds. Together with the economic recession, these strongly fluctuating demographic developments make it difficult for the Polish secondary education system to engage in reform. As compared to the present situation, the beginning of the twenty-first century will in this respect be more conducive to instigating reforms because of the fall in pupil numbers.

For many years, Poland has been one of the European countries with the highest demographic growth. In 1980, the growth rate was 9,6%. In 1991, it decreased to 3,7%. Poland is now rapidly getting "older", but not as rapidly as most other central and eastern European countries.

Enrolments in secondary education

The figures shown in Table 1 (see appendix) refer to all pupils in schools for "non-working" people. Enrolments in secondary schools between 1970 and 1985 kept declining, but have since started to increase.

It can be seen from the table that enrolments in technical and, to a lesser extent, in general secondary education have grown to the detriment of those in basic vocational education. However, in the most recent years the proportion of primary school-leavers entering general secondary schools has increased rapidly. In 1993/94, it was 28,0% as compared to 28,3% entering secondary technical and 39,5% entering lower vocational.

The population in the age-group 15 to 18 was 2 358 000 people in 1990. With enrolments in secondary schools amounting to 1 965 000, this means a rough enrolment rate of over 80%. But the size of this age-group will strongly decline as of the year 2000 and this alone will probably result in higher enrolment rates.

The structure of the Polish secondary education system is still inadequate for the needs of a developed country. As can be seen from Table 1, enrolments in general secondary education have oscillated in the last twenty years between about 20% and 25% of all secondary education enrolments.

Administrative organisation and non-state schools

In line with earlier announcements, school inspectorates were abolished in the school year 1990/91. They represented an intermediate level of (local) administration. At the same time, education administration at the local/

regional level was separated from general administration and given autonomy. These changes were based on the provisions of two laws passed by the Sejm (parliament): one on local self-government and the other on the education system. According to these laws, education administration consists of:

– the Ministry of Education, whose task it is to co-ordinate and implement state educational policy, to supervise the activities of regional education offices and to co-operate with other bodies and organisational units on questions connected with the functioning of the educational system;

– regional education offices, which direct the implementation of state educational policy in the forty-nine *voivodships*;

– principals of schools, who direct the current educational activities of the institutions under their care, supervise teaching, manage financial resources and control staffing policy. The education officer is the agent of the special government administration.

Changes in the system of educational management have brought about not only a levelling out of the structure of school administration, but also a maximum decentralisation of decision-making, amounting to the delegation of responsibility to lower levels of the management hierarchy.

A further important element of the changes consists in the creation of a legislative basis for the "communalisation" of educational management, both at the system level and at that of the individual educational institutions. Management bodies, under the responsibility of the communes, are designed to exercise this task. They are elected self-government bodies, which are part of a hierarchical structure together with parallel bodies in the educational administration. The latter include: the National Education Council, the *Voivodships* Education Councils and schools' councils.

In line with the Education Act of 19 July 1991, secondary schools can be of two types: public (state) schools, which offer free education within the framework of the outline curriculum, and non-public schools. The latter can be social (civic), Church or private schools, etc. Non-public schools appeared for the first time in the Polish education system in September 1989. A total of eleven general secondary schools of this type were established at this time. Their number has since increased very rapidly; in 1991, there were 308 (158 general and 150 vocational) and, at the beginning of 1993, there were over

650. The schools were called "social" or "civic" because of the great amount of work that was invested in them by people from local social groups; mostly parents and teachers.

These schools have their own curricula, which are approved by the Minister of Education. They are financed from fees paid by parents. Funds can also come from private enterprises and foundations. Since February 1990, non-public schools receive a subsidy calculated according to the number of pupils and 50% of the average cost of pupils in state schools. Several dozen "private" schools have also been opened, functioning as profit-making enterprises. Unlike the "social" schools, these private schools are clearly intended for the children of better-off families.

At present only 0,4% of primary school enrolments are in non-public schools. In secondary schools they represent about 4%.

Civic and private schools in Poland have the right to issue school certificates that are acknowledged by all other schools and by the universities.

Most non-public schools have rather small numbers of pupils and small classes. They distinguish themselves from the public schools, among others, by individualised instruction programmes, by a wider range of curriculum choice and by a higher standard of foreign language instruction. (*OECD Summary Background Report*, p. 12).

The role of the Church and religious education

It is not easy to describe the policy of the Church towards education after the elections of 19 September 1993 when the Polish Catholic society refused Catholic political parties. Some people think that this refusal was the result of the excessive involvement of the Church in politics or the excessive use of Catholic rhetoric by Catholic parties.

On the occasion of the 264th Conference of the Episcopate, the bishops commented on the elections as follows: "... we respect the result of the elections, as a consequence of which the leftist parties won". The bishops are certain that "the parliament (among others) will respect the right of the Church to exist in public life and in the school".

The role of the Church must be seen in this more general context rather than simply as a matter of public-private (Church) schools. In fact, Church schools make up only a very small percentage of all schools. In the school year

1991/92, there were five Church primary schools and forty secondary (of these thirty-five general secondary). It must be added that Church schools make up less than 10% of all non-public schools (see above).

The statistical data show that at the end of 1990, about 90% of pupils in secondary schools and 98% of those in primary schools received religious education. In some cases, these figures reflect a formal declaration rather than real participation, notably because marks given in religious education do not affect pupils' promotion to the next grade. In the primary schools, religious education is offered to pupils whose parents declare a wish to have such instruction provided for their children. In secondary schools, such a wish can be formulated by the parents or by the students themselves (after their nineteenth birthday young people take decisions independently).

Participation or non-participation in religious instruction should not lead to any form of discrimination (and, in fact, it does not). Parallel to religious instruction, ethics education is to be provided to pupils who so wish or whose parents have requested it. For students not participating in religious or ethics education, activities of various kinds are organised, depending on the material resources available in the school.

Religious education is carried out according to curricula and textbooks that have been approved by the respective Church authorities. Schools are allowed to employ teachers of religion solely on the basis of the recommendation of the respective Church authorities. The recommendation can be withdrawn by these same authorities who then recommend another teacher. The teacher of religion (a priest, a nun or a lay person) participates in the school education council but does not have the responsibilities that form teachers have.

The structure of secondary education

The following diagram shows the present structure of the Polish educational system. It is to be noted that eight years of primary (compulsory) education starts at age 7.

After primary school, pupils have the choice between the following schools:

– four-year general schools (called lyceums), which offer the opportunity of taking the matriculation examination; they prepare for university education and for professional careers;

– four- and five-year technical schools (and their equivalents, such as technical *lyceums*), preparing for both a professional career and university education. They also offer the possibility of taking the matriculation examination;

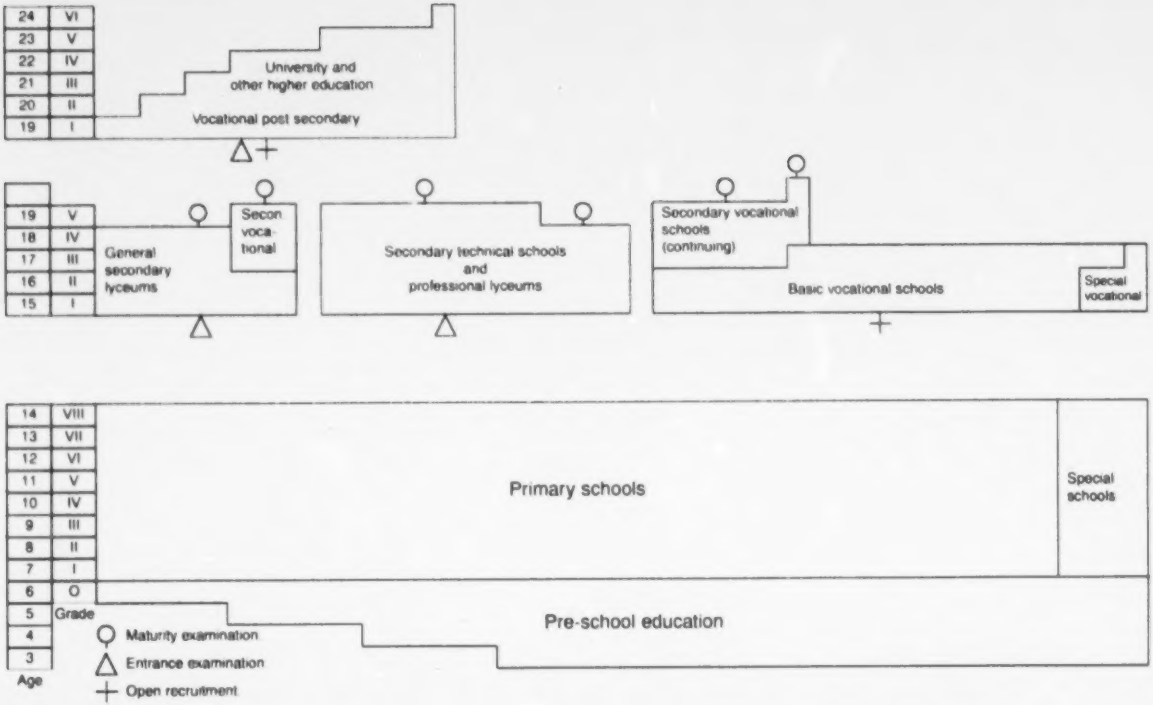
– three-year basic (elementary) vocational schools, which prepare qualified workers.

Admission to full secondary schools is based on entrance examinations and to basic vocational schools on open recruitment, except when the number of candidates exceeds the number of places. In this case, achievements at primary school are taken into account.

There are few possibilities for transfers between schools and most of these refer to transfers from general to vocational education. They are more "vertical" than "horizontal". Thus, after the second grade of general secondary school, pupils can enter a three-year vocational school. Pupils from basic vocational schools can, after the second or third grade, continue their studies at secondary vocational schools, which offer the opportunity of taking the matriculation examination.

The most significant feature of the development of secondary education in Poland in recent years is the creation of non-state schools. Another important feature refers to something that has, fortunately, not happened: the planned reform of the early 1970s intended to introduce the so-called "ten-year secondary school", which, in fact, would not have been secondary but rather a prolonged primary school. The reform would have been the belated implementation of the similar Soviet project of the 1950s. Although experience with the ten-year school in the Soviet Union was negative and the experiment was discontinued in 1973, it was, nevertheless, to be realised in Poland. Due to a shortage of teachers, financial means and a lack of progress in producing the required curricula, the reform remained on paper and was never really implemented.

The Polish education system



II. Issues section

1. The process of policy-making and innovation

The main role in educational policy-making is played by the Minister of Education, with the help of forty-nine *voivodship* education offices (see section 4, Chapter I).

The new educational legislation act foresees that all three administrative levels create educational councils, namely, the National Education Council, *voivodship* councils and school councils. These councils do not exist yet at the national and regional levels. School councils have, on the other hand, been formally established, but they are on the whole not yet operative on the local educational scene.

Primary schools are in the stages of "communalisation" (see Chapter I above). Secondary schools are administered by the *voivodship* educational offices.

An important role in the process of policy-making is played by teachers' trade unions and, in addition, by the Teacher "Solidarity" movement and The Polish Teachers' Union (the latter has a long history, but is connected with the former system). The minister must seek the advice and sometimes the agreement of these unions. As of recently, they are no longer only concerned with salary issues, but also with such problems as curricula and minimum programmes. These consultations are not always easy for both sides.

The involvement of parliament and its education commission in educational matters is rather passive. Parliament is, of course, through its members in the commission, free to make its own proposals. However, it mostly restricts itself to the issues proposed by the ministry. Parliament may accept, discuss or refuse ministerial proposals for educational acts. It must be stressed that, besides framework laws, a very large number of ministerial decrees are taken under the sole responsibility of the minister. Educational laws and decrees are prepared by the Legal Bureau of the Ministry of Education.

Contrary to the policy – and practice – until 1989, most innovations are initiated at the lowest level of the educational hierarchy, namely, in the individual school or class. Sometimes innovation concerns only one subject, sometimes it concerns the curriculum as a whole. It is the work of teachers, "innovators" who want to bring about change, to create a better school. They elaborate new textbooks of their own.

This type of school-based innovation started in about 1989 in civic schools, and the movement still exists. It is now spreading to public schools, helping in their transformations. Staff at the pedagogical institutes also sometimes attempt to introduce new trends in world pedagogy (critical pedagogy, anti-pedagogy, pedagogy of liberation) – but their influence is restricted to small numbers of teachers and pupils.

The Roman Catholic Church exercises its influence on education in an indirect way. It is not formally represented in councils or educational offices. However, since September 1990, clergy (priests or nuns) have returned to schools as teachers of religion. Sunday sermons at churches sometimes deal with educational issues.

External support for policy-making and central administration and for schools and teachers is not very developed. It is mainly provided by the National Centre for In-service Teacher Training, by the corresponding regional centres and by educational counsellors (see "school staff" below). Many elements of external support do not exist yet or they are in the stages of planning. There are no centres for data collection and documentation besides the educational statistics departments, which are part of the Main Statistical Board and of its branches in the *voivodships*.

Most *voivodships* have their own pedagogical libraries, which help teachers in their work. Sometimes, the problem is how to encourage them to use these libraries, the in-service teacher training centres and the advice of the educational counsellors. Educational research is not very well developed. There is only one institute for educational research: the Institute for Educational Research in Warsaw. Because of financial and staff problems, and because of a lack of clarity as to its links with the ministry, the institute is unable to cover every field. Besides, some university faculties carry out educational research projects. Occasionally, the faculties' work also has a bearing on educational tests and examinations.

Well-functioning centres for guidance and counselling (545 of them in 1988/89) are intended for pupils (mostly for primary school pupils) rather than

teachers. Some large schools employ school pedagogues or psychologists who are very helpful in solving internal school or personal problems.

2. Financing and budgeting

A basic problem for Polish education is its inadequate material conditions: buildings, equipment, teachers' salaries, etc. Although the members of the post-communist government understood the problems that the schools faced, it was obvious that no radical improvement could be expected in this respect, due to the poor state of the overall state budget. The situation has not improved in the past three years, and it may now be even worse than before.

The overwhelming majority of funds for education come from the state budget. As a result of the budgetary problems that were mentioned before, in 1991 the state subsidies for education were reduced twice. The Ministry of Education was forced to introduce an austerity programme, involving a reduction in the number of staff posts and the number of teaching hours per week, and the cancelling of extracurricular activities.

Public expenditure on education has varied as follows over the years: in 1970 it was 7,5% of the overall state budget, in 1975, 8,7%, in 1980, 7,0%, in 1985, 11,6%, in 1989, 11,7%, in 1990, 12,8%, in 1991, 11,6%, in 1992, 10,3% and in 1993, about 9% (but it must be remembered that the figures for the 1970s and 1980s include expenditure on higher education).

This decreasing trend does not explain everything because the figures refer to a negative economic growth. The educational budget was thus a smaller and smaller part of a decreasing gross domestic product: the annual evolution of the GDP was 4,2% in 1986, 0,2% in 1989, -11,5% in 1990, and -8,0% in 1991. As a result of this trend, education expenditure in 1992 represented only 73,5% of the outlay in 1990.

The recurrent and investment expenditure for secondary education was, in 1991, 18,9% of the total expenditure on education (including all education, from kindergarten to higher education). Of this 18,9%, 5,5% was for general secondary and 13,4% for all types of secondary vocational schools. About 68% of expenditure for vocational education came directly from the Ministry of Education, via the forty-nine *voivodship* educational offices. Some industrial, agricultural, medical and artistic vocational schools are maintained by the appropriate ministries and by enterprises; in total, 32% of the overall costs.

In 1990, 6,6% of GNP was spent on education; in 1991, 5,4%; and in 1992, 5,6%. The municipalities contributed, in 1991, 7,2 thousand million zlotys: over 90% of this sum served to finance primary schools and kindergartens in rural areas.

In the past, educational expenditure was, in Poland, as in the other countries of the former Soviet bloc, calculated as a percentage of net national income, namely, of a smaller total value than the gross domestic product (GDP). In 1970, educational expenditure thus represented 3,8% of national income, 4% in 1980 and 3,6% in 1988. If one calculates this expenditure as a percentage of GDP, one obtains slightly lower figures. In other words, in the past also the budget for education was relatively low.

At any rate, however, comparisons are difficult because educational expenditure was sometimes presented as a part of the net national income, sometimes as a part of the gross national income and sometimes as a part of the divided national income. The statistical data were thus manipulated in order to conceal the contradiction between truth and rhetoric.

It should be underlined that the overwhelming majority of educational expenditure (about 84%) concerns salaries. Very little is assigned to running costs. The part of salaries has, in the past years, even increased: 60% in 1980 and 79% in 1990. The part of running costs has accordingly decreased. The poor state of maintenance of many schools should, therefore, not surprise. This should be kept in mind when considering the fact that in some state schools running costs are partly paid by parents. Nevertheless, the simple fact cannot be denied that in spite of the constitutional right of the child to free education, part of the burden of financing falls, in the present situation of constantly declining state resources, on parents. It is estimated that at present this drain on family budgets amounts, on average, to 17% of total educational expenditure.

Because more detailed data are not available, only the average budget expenditure per pupil in 1991 can be given. In general secondary schools it was 2,8 million zloty, and 3,3 million in vocational schools (compared to 2,7 million in primary schools). Because of inflation it is difficult to convert these figures into United States dollars (US$), but it can be safely estimated that in 1991 this represents between 350 and 400 US$ per secondary school pupil.

3. School and society

The basic reconstruction of the socio-economic and political system led to fundamental changes in the objectives of education and, in particular, in those of vocational training and retraining. The system of vocational training, which is still being operated, was established to meet the needs of a planned economy. It is not suited to serve the needs of a rapidly changing economic situation and a fluctuating labour-market. New relations between vocational education and the "world of work" became necessary. Indications of the inappropriateness of the current system regarding the requirements of a market economy can be seen in:

– a decline in opportunities for employment for those who have successfully completed vocational education and consequently a growing rate of unemployment for this group;

– a loosening of ties between the economy and vocational schools, which manifests itself, in particular, in the closing down of vocational schools attached to enterprises and in the fact that enterprises no longer offer apprenticeship training places. The latter is particularly true of state enterprises that dispose of their own training facilities. These facilities were – and still are – financed by ministries other than that of education.

Data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy on unemployment among school-leavers in August 1991 show that the greatest difficulties in finding work are experienced by those who successfully complete vocational training in the following fields: economic technicians, medical technicians, nurses, agricultural technicians, forestry technicians and related trades, and those with administrative qualifications. Of those who successfully completed basic vocational education, agricultural workers, gardeners, land improvement workers and related trades, waiters, chefs, mechanics, metalworkers and chemical production workers experienced the greatest problems.

The employment problems of vocational graduates are most serious in those regions where the development of the private economy is insufficient. The new law on employment and unemployment introduced financial incentives for enterprises that employ graduates from higher education, and from basic and secondary vocational courses. Such enterprises are exempted from paying contributions to the labour fund from the salaries of these employees, from the wages tax and from the salaries tax. In addition, they are not obliged to pay salary increases over a period not exceeding twelve months since the

school-leaver was sent to them by the regional labour exchange. But it must be said that these legal measures have not been very efficient.

In the new Law on the Education System there is no mention of the vocational schools that are attached to enterprises. Enterprises can, however, still found and run their own vocational schools.

Close co-operation between education officers and employment exchanges is an important factor in the choice of specialisations in vocational training in a given region. The Law on the Education System provides for the setting up of *voivodship* education councils, one of whose tasks it will be to investigate the educational needs of the *voivodship* and to take the appropriate steps for ensuring that these needs are met. The presence of representatives of the *voivodship* labour exchanges on the councils will facilitate the information flow on the evolution of the labour-market in the region and in the country as a whole. In line with the law, practical vocational training can take place in state-owned enterprises, workplaces, institutions, privately owned farms, other private organisations and collective bodies.

Community educational activities are also strongly affected by the difficult conditions of the transition period. Schools, concerned as they were with educational and curriculum problems, have done little to organise out-of-school educational activities for their pupils. Co-operation between schools and communities has, in this respect, been inadequate. It was restricted in practice to financial support and to carrying out the most urgent activities. Teachers and pupils hardly participated in the contacts with the environment. Moreover, only school principals were in a position to start co-operation with an outside institution.

On the other hand, enterprises restricted their activities aimed at supporting local communities, schools in their extracurricular activities, local infrastructure and teenagers' organisations, and by financing sports and recreation facilities for children and young people. The restrictions were in the first place due to financial problems. Enterprises were too involved in modernising their production, reorganising, solving the social problems of their workers, and tackling many other matters connected with social and economic changes.

Over the last two or three years, the percentage of schools that have developed co-operation activities with community institutions has fallen considerably. About 50% of schools do not now have any contacts with social organisations or associations, cultural or educational institutions or with the Church. About 60% of them have no contacts with enterprises, service and retail

organisations, or with any other commercial or industrial organisation. In this matter, there is no significant difference between schools in rural and urban areas.

In recent years there has been a clear tendency to launch commercial activities in community, cultural and educational centres. Educational institutions have begun to determine their activities on the basis of the rules of the free market and have turned towards profit-making projects and, in general, to securing their own sources of income. Such a trend is, naturally, developing predominantly in out-of-school educational and cultural institutions, but it also applies to schools. Sometimes, they lease rooms or equipment to civic schools, and sometimes office space to commercial firms or service companies. They also organise all types of commercial sales and receptions for special occasions such as weddings, or other celebrations.

The parish church is a significant element in the community infrastructure. Its direct influence is perhaps not so great but it is highly visible. The churches, both those that have been in existence for a long time as well as those that are newly built and established, have intensified their teaching, educational and caring role in the local community. These activities have been developed parallel to the introduction of religion as a subject of teaching in the schools. The Church, because of its high moral authority and the fact that it is generally accepted by the local population, and also because of the frequent contacts between priests and people from all generations, has real possibilities for influencing children and young people's behaviour and ways of thinking, and putting into practice its educational ideas in the local community. The role of the Church can be particularly important where social pathologies linked to alcoholism, use of drugs, vandalism and violence have started to develop.

Some schools attempt to solve these problems by themselves. They organise lectures and discussions on health related issues, in particular on HIV infection, drugs and alcohol.

Schools' concerns with art and culture are among others reflected in long and widespread traditions of visits to museums and theatre-going. In this matter, much depends on the initiative of individual teachers, headmasters, tutors and, sometimes, pupils. But such activities are mostly organised by general secondary schools.

School councils exist in all schools. They are composed of equal numbers of teachers, parents and pupils. They are elected by the groups that they repre-

sent. Pupil councils also operate within schools. They can present to the School Council, Teachers' Council and headmaster their suggestions and opinions on all matters that relate to the school, in particular, those that affect the rights of pupils. Pupils and parents learn how to use their rights, sometimes with success, but sometimes their participation in the school's affairs remains a pure formality. The Law on the Educational System, of 7 September 1991, outlines the powers of the school councils. They establish school statutes and formulate views on financial and pedagogical issues. The school councils can also ask the educational authority to evaluate the school as a whole, its teachers and headmaster. The relevant council resolutions cannot be annulled.

Parent associations and pupil associations do not exist yet, except when it comes to the participation of parents and pupils in the forementioned councils.

4. Administration and organisation of the education system and schools

The programmes of secondary education are presented in Section 6 below.

The Polish system of secondary education does not provide many possibilities for transfers. Therefore, the school that enrols most pupils, the basic vocational school, is often called a "blind alley". Pupils choose their school with the help of parents and teachers on the basis of their interests and educational achievements. They can also ask advice from a centre for guidance and counselling if they are undecided – but this applies more to pupils who have learning problems.

Special schools are for children and young people who are blind, deaf, seriously ill, mentally retarded, physically handicapped or socially maladjusted. In line with the overall principles of the education system, these schools are divided into primary and secondary schools.

In the school year 1990/91, there were 769 special primary schools, with 7 247 classes and 84 317 pupils. Most of these (over 64 000) were mentally retarded children.

In the same year, there were 9 special general secondary schools with 32 classes and 421 pupils; 15 special technical secondary schools with 61 grades and 896 pupils; and 275 basic vocational special schools with 1 721 grades

and 24 655 pupils. Of the latter, 87% attended schools for the mentally retarded. In other words, the number of special vocational schools is much greater than that of special general or technical schools and so is the number of pupils in the special vocational schools: in general education, they represent 0,1% of the total, in technical education, 0,1%, but in vocational education, about 3%.

Special schools can be organised as independent units or may form part of special residential homes or special educational and care centres. They can also be organised in association with hospitals or sanatoria. Pupils are sent to special schools on the basis of a medical statement, but in all cases the parent's agreement is necessary.

In the last few years in Poland (as in other countries), a new pedagogical approach can be observed: the traditional segregation between special and other schools has made room for a new approach in which the aim is the integration of all pupils. One speaks no longer of "special schools" but of "special education". The Education Act of 1991 defines, among other things, the rules of this integration and the status of an integrated school or kindergarten. The act also supports the initiatives of parents' associations concerning integrated education.

According to the act, a headmaster and a pedagogical council may, after a relevant resolution has been adopted by the school council, organise special classes. It must, however, be underlined that until now only a very small number of schools, most of them non-public, have attempted to integrate special and "normal" education in the same school. On the other hand, it must be recalled that integrated education cannot in all cases replace special education.

Education for minority groups

Minorities in Poland represent between only 3% and 4% of the population. Of these, 350 000 are Germans, and 200 000 to 250 000 Belorussians. Ukranians form the third group, but there are also smaller groups of Lithuanians, Slovaks and Romanies. The status of national minority education is regulated by the Education Act of 1991. The act stipulates that teaching is to support minorities' national, ethnic and linguistic identities.

A shortage of teachers in minority languages is the main reason for the fact that, in the past, not enough schools and/or classes were available for teach-

ing minorities in their own language. The situation has in this respect improved greatly in the past few years.

Schools for minority groups exist in eastern and southern parts of Poland where such groups live. In most of these schools, the mother tongue is taught as a special subject. In some schools, teaching is organised on the basis of two languages (Polish and Belorussian, Polish and Slovak, etc.) or it is entirely carried out in the other language (with the exception of Polish language and history courses).

The overwhelming majority of minority schools are primary schools. In June 1993, there were 45 schools for Belorussians (of which two general secondary) with 3 611 pupils; 50 schools for Ukrainians (three general secondary) with 1 642 pupils; 28 for Germans (no secondary schools) with 1 307 pupils; 13 for Lithuanians (1 general secondary) with 716 pupils; and 18 schools for Slovaks (1 general secondary) with 509 pupils.

Adult education

Adult education is offered by schools and institutions of higher education that offer extramural and correspondence courses for adults. In addition, it is also offered by workplaces, the co-operative movement, craftsmen's organisations, voluntary and private educational organisations, trade unions, professional associations (for example, of engineers and technicians, economists, accountants, etc.), by voluntary bodies such as the Association of Polish Educationalists, the General Knowledge Society, etc. In 1990, there were 244 000 students in the adult education system at school level, 80% of whom were in vocational schools and 20% in general secondary schools. Graduates of the adult school system obtain the same qualifications and rights as those from "normal" schools.

The Ministry of Education, as it does not want the collapse of the state adult vocational training sector, has taken over schools threatened with closure. The main reason for the potential collapse of this sector is the poor state of the economy. Over the last three years, the ministry has thus taken into its charge over 500 vocational schools that offer adult education and that were previously administered by other ministries. The ministry is also trying to maintain all the schools that function within the framework of continuing education centres ("continuing" meaning more than "adult": it refers to lifelong or permanent education). At present, there are over fifty regional and district centres in operation, which integrate school and out-of-school forms of adult education. These centres should to be the strongest institutions in

the field of continuing education in their respective regions, responding to the needs of the regional and local labour-markets, and to those of the inhabitants. There is also a network of rural people's universities – at present about twenty.

Because the state adult education sector is not able to meet the needs of a considerable number of adults, the ministry attempts to promote educational activity on behalf of voluntary organisations and private persons. As a result, a private sector is now developing parallel to the public sector. The development of the private sector shows up in the statistical data: in 1988, 265 voluntary organisations, companies, foundations and private persons were licensed by the Ministry of Education to organise educational activity. In 1990, there were already 560 such organisations, and by 1991, over 2 000 institutions of various types, representing both the public and private sector, were organising different types of adult education. The ministry can influence the private adult education sector by approving (or not) their curricula and by controlling the training of the teaching staff. The level of teachers' salaries and participants' fees do not depend on the ministry's decisions.

In line with the new education policy, this sector should constitute an excellent supplement to the public sector. Its main advantage lies undoubtedly in its ability to react quickly and correctly to the requirements of the market.

Internal school support is even less well developed than external support. Only a few secondary schools (mostly general secondary) provide internal guidance and counselling (school pedagogues, psychologists). At present health care is limited because of financial difficulties and because the school-medical staff that are employed by the local health authorities do not dispose of adequate financial means.

5. The school as an organisation and as a community

There are no clear rules on this matter. The situation in individual schools, depends, to a very large extent, on teachers' attitudes and initiatives (see above for the role of the school councils). To a certain extent, the internal organisation of the school, the formal and informal links between staff and pupils, the relations between learning and behavioural patterns, are determined by the social origin of the pupils.

Reliable data on such matters are rare or non-existent. What is available is everyday knowledge that is not supported by research data.

At present, schools' participation in local and regional cultural activities, in sport and the like, is less than it was a few years ago.

Partnership relations between the participants in the school educational activities (teachers, parents, pupils) refer not only to the school as a formal institution; they depend, to a large extent upon the school functioning as a "social community".

At present, there is still a great divergence between the planned and the real functioning of the Polish school. It is rare that schools function as adequate socio-behavioural environments. There are several reasons for this. People in Polish schools have for many years learned to live in a double reality; the formal one and the real one. As a result, all participants in the educational process, but first of all the parents, are still too passive. Pupils' self-government and school councils play only a verbal role.

A "pupil code" was formulated many years ago, but it lives on paper rather than in real school life. The code establishes the general rules and framework for pupil and teacher co-existence. They should share such values as understanding, kindness and respect. The code establishes only the formal conditions for self-government, partnership and joint responsibility for the activity of the school. Schools should secure the conditions that are indispensable for realising the resolutions of the code. On the basis of the code every school may establish its own statute.

The code also outlines pupils' rights, duties, rewards and penalties. The school statute must spell out the relevant details. The code enjoins pupils to take care of their health, in particular, by refraining from smoking, drinking alcohol and using drugs.

More detailed regulations in these matters are defined by ministerial decrees. For example, prohibition of smoking refers to all educational institutions. However, as many teachers smoke, this decree is not always applied. Teachers are obliged to send pupils who use drugs to a guidance and counselling centre.

6. The curriculum

In the years between 1988 and 1990, the Polish educational system has undertaken to change its syllabuses. The changes were, however, at first of a temporary character only; as they were not connected with any thorough

reform of the system as a whole. But as soon as the socio-political system started to change, as of 1989, the changes also concerned important matters.

On the whole, the aim was to free pupils and teachers of too rigid regulations, including those concerning the curriculum. The changes were to create a situation where they could feel independent and responsible, and work in a more creative way. It has been recognised that this may be achieved first of all by restricting the scope of obligatory teaching contents. These decisions were indispensable since the teachers and superintendents, as well as parents and pupils, unanimously claimed that the syllabuses of the mid-1970s and the 1980s could not be implemented as they were overloaded and too encyclopedic in character. As a result, pupils were not only overworked, but their learning was very superficial.

From the school year 1990/91, the Ministry of Education introduced, in the system of secondary education, revised curricula for general subjects and general vocational subjects, for example, "economics of enterprises" and "economics" instead of "political economy". The following principles were adopted:

- the core curriculum contains themes that must be regarded as compulsory, but the teacher may decide on the degree of detail in which each particular theme is treated;

- the order in which themes are taught and the amount of time devoted to each is a matter for the teacher to decide, according to his interpretation of the curriculum;

- non-compulsory or optional themes are only suggestions. The teacher has the right to reject them in their totality, or introduce some of them that he himself chooses, or to introduce new themes of his own;

- the teacher has the right to choose forms and methods of teaching and to choose the textbooks in view of the requirements of a particular class, of the school's equipment, of the organisational framework within which he operates and of his own inclinations. The main criteria applied in the choice of teaching methods should be their effectiveness in attaining the particular goals of the curriculum that is being taught. Teachers have a greater choice of textbooks in the lower grades of primary education. In general, in the higher grades, only one textbook is available.

This project is currently being discussed in public nationwide. It will probably be considerably modified in view of the many suggestions and criticisms that have been voiced.

Curriculum changes must be accompanied by a reorganisation of grading. The new programmes, in particular the alternative versions, do not easily fit into the previous rigid system of grades and of teaching periods. The teaching staff needs to be appropriately prepared so they can make use of them.

The changes in the syllabuses are prepared by the Bureau for Educational Reform, which was attached to the Ministry of Education. The bureau takes into consideration publications and points of view concerning the curricula and invites the contributions of specialists. Special commissions are responsible for every type and level of school, and for each subject.

Theoretically, everybody can write and publish textbooks, but on the textbook "market" only those with ministerial approval have a chance. Three substantive and one linguistic opinion are required for the official approval of a textbook. Their actual publication is the task of a publishing house. An important role is also played by "public opinion", represented by educational advisers.

The curricula (contents, core curricula, timetables) are published as legal texts and as ministerial decrees. Schools can, however, also choose a so-called "author programme", prepared by a teacher or by a group of teachers. Such programmes can be applied after they have received ministerial approval. Teachers in primary and secondary schools have great freedom in matters concerning the curriculum provided they fulfil one condition: they have to implement the so-called minimum syllabus.

For obvious reasons, the greatest changes in the secondary school curriculum have been introduced in subjects such as Polish, history and social studies. In primary schools, besides the already changed curricula, great organisational changes are expected to be carried out.

On the other hand, it must be stressed again that teachers are not adequately prepared for such profound changes. Many educational experts think that teachers of the first grades of primary school (grades 1 to 3) should follow their pupils into the upper grades. In the lower grades, one single teacher teaches all subjects (or blocks of subjects). In the higher grades, each subject has a different teacher and pupils change classroom for each subject. As a result, for some children the transition from grades 3 to 4 is difficult, in spite

of the fact that there are no examinations or tests. In grade 4, they pass from a system of one ("their") single teacher, usually female, to a system of many "unknown" teachers. They have to stay at school three to four hours longer each week and they frequently change classroom.

Learning in the lyceums is profiled in the following way: 55,5% of pupils attend schools with the basic profile; 15,3% with a mathematical-physical profile; 6,7% with a humanistic profile; and 15,2% with a biological-chemical profile. About 7% of the pupils choose other profiles (pedagogical, classical, sport, etc.). The number and type of profiles offered depends on the teaching staff and on the size of the school. Larger schools offer more profiles and have a more visible specialisation, often related to the school's tradition. Schools do their own profiling. Pupils choose their profiles according to their interests and abilities. They can take advice from a centre for guidance and counselling if they or their parents have not already made their choice, but in every case they have a free choice. During the first grade they can still change profile.

Pupils from all types of secondary schools have thirty-eight teaching weeks per year, namely, the same number as in primary education.

The timetable shown in Table 3 represents the basic profile. The mathematical-physical profile has more hours of mathematics and physics and the other profiles more of the corresponding subjects. While in the general secondary schools the principle of profiling is still operating, the syllabuses will, henceforward, be the same in all first grades. In this way, a change of specialisation after grade 1 is made possible.

7. Evaluation and assessment

This part of educational research is not developed, besides single projects and case studies. Establishing a comprehensive system of evaluation is one of the great tasks for the future. At present, only general information about entrance examinations is available.

Each candidate applying for admission to a full secondary school (in which students can sit for the maturity certificate) is rated according to the number of points that he receives. Points are awarded for:

- marks obtained in the entrance examination;

– marks in the primary school certificate for Polish language, mathematics and, in certain cases, the major subject chosen in secondary school (see Section 6 above);

– the average of all marks in the last primary school certificate.

Entrance examinations include a written and an oral test (in Polish language and in mathematics). Furthermore, there is an oral examination in the subject chosen as a major in the secondary school in question. For example, candidates who apply for admission to general secondary school and who wish to major in biology and chemistry must take an examination in biology with elements of chemistry.

Top-scorers in *voivodship* inter-school competitions of proficiency in particular subjects (so-called "school subject olympic games") may be exempted from taking the entrance examination.

In line with the recent changes in the Polish educational system (grater school autonomy, new non-state schools) some schools themselve organise their entrance examinations (based on slightly changed rules) at an earlier date than the "normal" state schools. This applies, in particular, to schools that have considerably more candidates than places.

Secondary school students are promoted to a higher grade if they have received at least "average" marks for all compulsory subjects at the end of the school year (marks are scaled as follows: 6-excellent, 5-very good, 4-good, 3-satisfactory, 2-mediocre or average, 1-unsatisfactory). In special cases, the school pedagogical council may decide to conduct a classifying examination for potential repeaters.

Every secondary school organises and sets its own entrance examinations and this is the reason why the results cannot be compared. For example: every school has to organise the entrance examination for Polish, a written test defined by the teachers of the school. Theoretically, there can be as many tests as there are schools that organise entrance examinations.

The final examination of the secondary school grants the "maturity certificate". More than 90% of the graduates of general and technical secondary education enter this examination. The themes of the written examinations are defined by the regional education offices. It is difficult, therefore, to compare the results at national level. The necessity of constructing a national evaluation system has been gradually recognised. The first steps have recently

been taken in this direction. Thus, the ministry supports work that aims at developing standard evaluation elements and introducing them in the "maturity" examination. The introduction of norm-referenced tests of academic achievement is being considered. But it is thought that the examination should comprise a mixture of school-based and external examination tasks.

For many years there have been discussions – sometimes lively – on the transition from secondary to higher education and particularly on the association of performance in secondary school with admission to higher education. The matter is still under discussion and no decision has as yet been taken. Admission to higher education is at present based on entrance examinations and on free recruitment. Until 1989, the admission system was entirely based on examinations. In this matter, full power lies, in the present system, with the university and the faculty or department.

In general, faculties with large demands organise competitive entrance examinations. There are different types of examinations: written, oral, tests, "qualifying talks" (mostly checking motivation). In some faculties where free recruitment prevails, the first year of study is used in order to select the students who will be admitted to further studies.

8. School staff

Teacher training is organised by the following institutions: universities, higher institutes or schools of pedagogy (they are separate institutions of higher education, sometimes called "pedagogical universities"), teacher training courses (discontinued after 1991), pedagogical technical courses (discontinued as of 1992), higher education teacher training institutes attached to polytechnics, academies of economy, agricultural academies, medical academies, academies of music, academies of art, physical education academies and the Higher Institute of Special Pedagogy. ("Polytechnics" stand for technical universities. "Academy" is the popular name for the institutes of higher education. They are not connected with the Academy of Science).

The following types of teacher training exist at the universities:

– five-year, full-time at MA level for teachers in subjects taught in the general curriculum. Graduates are qualified to teach in all types of secondary schools;

– extramural, five-year MA courses for teachers of various subjects taught in the general curriculum;

– extramural, three-year courses at the higher education level for those who successfully completed two-year teacher training courses.

The education of these students in psychology and pedagogy takes place parallel to their specialist training, but as a result of the autonomy granted to the universities in the 1990s, many of them have limited the amount of time on subjects related to pedagogy and psychology – a practice that throws doubt on the value of training teachers at universities.

Higher institutes of pedagogy also concentrate on the specialist discipline chosen by the student, at the expense of training in the educational care skills that the teacher needs.

In most higher education teacher training institutes (polytechnics, academies), there are special inter-faculty pedagogical centres, which deal with educational disciplines and co-ordinate pedagogical training. In most of them, the number of hours devoted to educational subjects is similar to the pattern in the universities and the higher institutes of pedagogy. These institutions train teachers in vocational subjects for technical schools and basic vocational schools. Academies of music and art and physical education academies train teachers for all types of schools.

About 79% of students of pedagogical studies are trained in full-time MA courses of five-years' duration, at universities, higher institutes of pedagogy, polytechnics and academies. The final certificates of all these studies (an MA) have the same value. University graduates are, however, mostly employed in general secondary schools, graduates of the higher institutes of pedagogy work in primary schools in villages and small towns, and graduates of polytechnics and academies become teachers of vocational subjects or of art, music or physical education.

There is a possible vertical "promotion" of teachers from primary to secondary schools, but this takes the form of an offer from the educational authorities rather than at at the request of a teacher.

Other future teachers are trained at three-year colleges (about 21%). These prepare, first of all, foreign language teachers (parallel to the universities) and smaller numbers of teachers for primary schools. Extramural courses give the same rights as regular courses. Teachers of vocational education acquire practical training in their institutes, enterprises and at vocational schools.

As of 1990, a new form of teacher training has been introduced: teacher training colleges with three-year courses. These train teachers of foreign languages (English, German and French) for various types of schools. These colleges are closely integrated with particular universities or higher pedagogical institutes, whose task it is to supervise the work of the teacher training colleges. The agreement of an institution of higher education to supervise it is a pre-condition for the opening of such teacher training colleges. The emphasis is on practical training.

In 1988, about 6% of all practising teachers had studied in the extramural system. Of these, about 72% worked in primary schools. As a matter of fact, the average level of initial training is lowest in primary schools.

Institutionalised, in-service teacher training is organised by:

- the National Centre for In-service Teacher Training, which is directly subordinated to the Minister of Education;

- regional centres of the same kind;

- educational advisers.

The brief of the national centre includes elaborating proposals for models of in-service teacher training, co-ordinating the relevant activities, co-operating with the regional centres, programming and co-ordinating the organisation of further professional qualification of practising teachers and, finally, producing and distributing teacher training materials.

The key tasks of the regional centres include: diagnosis of teachers' qualifications and of their need for in-service training; organisation of various forms of in-service training in line with identified needs (for example, in connection with the setting up of new educational institutions, of community schools, of private schools, and of classes with special individual programmes and new subjects, or new optional subjects); inspiring innovation and methodological progress; and offering advice to teachers who are introducing innovatory or experimental activities.

The educational advisers organise in-service training for teachers at a particular school, supervise teachers in their first years of professional work, offer a disciplinary and methodological advising service, and maintain contact with the regional in-service teacher training centres. In the past few years, the

in-service teacher training system has organised courses for some 70 000 to 80 000 teachers per year. Some of these courses are obligatory.

The National Centre for In-service Teacher Training also organises postgraduate studies for headmasters and for other management staff. Headmasters are, since 1991, elected in the following way:

– there is an open competition;

– a commission appointed by the regional director of education chooses an appropriate candidate. This commission is composed of teachers (elected by the pedagogical council of the school in question), of parents and of education officers.

As of January 1990, the system of granting teacher's specialisation degrees has been changed. Educational administration officers can, henceforward, obtain this degree, but they have to meet high methodological requirements.

New members of the main and regional qualifying commissions were appointed. A new set of requirements, as well as new regulations for granting professional specialisation degrees (from the first to the third one), were introduced. Only teachers with a doctorate are allowed to compete for admission to the third degree without having completed the requirements for the previous degrees. All other teachers have to start teaching at first degree level. Teachers with degrees obtain a modest monthly allowance. It should be mentioned that it is not obligatory to gain a degree. The degree is a formal confirmation of a high qualification and of good results of pedagogical work. The first condition to start the procedure is to obtain a very good rating by the headmaster. The examination comprises two parts: theoretical and practical. Examinations for the first and second degree are organised by the *voivodship* educational offices, those for the third degree by the National Centre for In-Service Training. In addition to a positive evaluation of the teacher's work, degrees are dependent on formal qualifications (applying for admission to the second and third degree requires the equivalent of an MA) and upon the length of teaching experience (for the first degree, at least five years).

The majority of full-time teachers in secondary school have a workload of eighteen hours per week. Teachers of practical subjects in vocational schools have twenty-two lesson hours. Non-teaching duties are still not clearly defined and discussions on this matter are continuing between the ministry

and trade unions. Most teachers have additional teaching hours (usually about four to six hours a week).

At the end of 1992, the average net monthly teaching salary in secondary schools, including all extras such as additional hours, was approximately 2 700 000 zlotys (at the time of writing, this is about US$ 174). Until mid-1991, the salary of a secondary school teacher amounted to about 110% of the average salary in Poland. At the end of 1992, it was no more than 95% of the average income. In fact, salaries in the public service are generally very low, with the exception of those in central offices and in ministries.

9. The European dimension

The year 1990 represented a turning point in Poland's relations with the Council of Europe. Poland signed, in this year, the European Cultural Convention and, without being, at the time, a full member of the Council, started to take part in the work of the Council for Cultural Co-operation. Co-operation concerned, in the first instance, mainly programmes of foreign language teaching, adult education and university education.

In the meantime, Poland has become a full member state of the Council of Europe.

The substantial assistance offered by western countries in organising the colleges (see Section 8 above), by providing equipment and books and professional advice, and by making available a number of teachers, should be highlighted. Help for language colleges has come from the British Council, Voluntary Services Overseas, the Peace Corps and World Teach. Much support has also be given by the Governments of the USA, France, Germany, Austria and Canada.

Since the 1989/90 school year, Russian language learning, which used to start in grade 5 of primary school, is no longer obligatory. Due to a shortage of teachers in other foreign languages however, pupils do not always have a choice. In an attempt to remedy this situation, the Ministry of Education has widened the possibilities of employment for foreign language teachers from other countries, not only in colleges, but in schools as well.

In the school year 1990/91, most pupils learned Russian: 41% in the primary schools, 73% in secondary technical, 85% in basic vocational education and almost 86% in general secondary education (in 1986/87 these figures were respectively 46,5%, 92,1%, 68% and 99,9%). The percentage of pupils

taking foreign languages is at present higher than it was a few years ago. Thus, for example, 63,1% of pupils in grade 1 of general secondary education took English and 55,3%, German. The respective averages for all grades were 52,6% and 44,1%. In 1986/87, the same averages were only 44,5% and 38,2% (see Tables 7 and 8 in the appendix).

Pupil exchanges and international co-operation involving schools are on the increase. In 1990, 537 schools (primary and secondary) were involved in schemes based on signed agreements for co-operation with almost 800 corresponding schools abroad.

Co-operation with Unesco in the field of education means that Poland takes part in the implementation of many Unesco educational programmes. Steps are being taken to adapt education and teacher training to the changing socio-political situation in central and eastern Europe. Co-operation with many countries in the Unesco Camps organisation for pupils of associated schools has continued. In 1990, ninety-two Polish schools were involved.

III. Efficiency and performance

Since 1970, the structure of the Polish secondary education system has not changed. It is now in a period of transition and the main changes under way concern syllabuses. In secondary schools, the need for changes in the teaching programmes has become manifest. As already mentioned, the structure of the Polish secondary education system no longer responds to the needs of individuals and Polish society. There are too many basic vocational schools, teaching for very narrowly defined jobs, and too few general secondary schools. A number of vocational schools will have to be transformed into general secondary schools. This will not be an easy task, particularly, if it concerns company-owned schools, because companies have great economic difficulties. Many of these schools are state schools that depend on administrations other than the Ministry of Education or on public enterprises. In the case where a state enterprise has a school that depends on a non-educational ministry, the Ministry of Education is responsible only for its pedagogical supervision and for approving its curriculum.

Precise statistical data for these schools are not available, because in statistics all public schools are presented together. It can be estimated that they make up some 25% to 30% of all vocational (secondary and post-secondary) schools.

The reform of vocational schools requires as a pre-condition the complete restructuring of the economy. Not only is vocational education in its present shape incompatible with the needs of an economy in transition, but it is also burdened with the legacies of the economic system of the 1950s. These are the main reasons for the inefficiency of the present secondary vocational schools.

Enrolments in secondary eduction are presented in Table 1 (see Chapter I above). Although the number of pupils in general secondary schools is growing, this increase is still too modest to induce a significant change in the system since the numbers in technical education are also on the increase.

Table 9 shows that the highest rates of drop-out and repeaters occur in vocational schools. In this respect, the general secondary schools are more efficient.

Unemployment of secondary school-leavers concerns, first of all, vocational schools. In December 1991, the overall number of unemployed secondary education graduates was 212 500 (data refer to the age-group 18 to 20). Of these, 8,5% were graduates from general secondary education, 33,6% from technical secondary and 57,9% from basic vocational. Unemployment figures change rapidly. Hence, any conclusions drawn from the above data are subject to caution. In December 1991, the unemployed represented almost 44% of all secondary graduates. In interpreting these data it must, however, be kept in mind that the low unemployment rate of graduates from general secondary education is mainly due to the fact that most of them continue their education at the tertiary level.

Admission to higher education is, as has already been mentioned, based mainly on entrance examinations. In 1990, there were 128 200 candidates seeking admission to MA studies. Of these, 73 300 passed the examination and 68 400 took up study. The percentage of graduates from the general secondary schools that is admitted to higher education is on the increase: in 1993/94, the figure was 67%, compared to only 54% in 1990/91. The proportion of graduates from secondary technical schools admitted to higher education has also increased significantly: from only 16% in 1990/91 to 27% in 1993/94 (*OECD Summary Background Report*, Figure 3, p. 64). The number of candidates is smaller than the overall number of secondary graduates entitled to apply for admission to higher education.

As already mentioned, those who complete secondary education can either obtain the final certificate or the maturity certificate. Only the latter are entitled to enter university or other higher schools. Most candidates for higher studies come from the general secondary schools. Graduates of secondary technical schools with maturity certificates have, however, the same right of access to higher education as those from general secondary education.

In 1989, there were about 174 000 secondary education graduates with maturity certificates – 82 500 from general secondary schools and 91 500 from technical schools. If we compare this number with the total number of graduates from these two types of secondary education, namely, 189 000, we see that 92% complete secondary school with the maturity certificate. In 1990, the ratio candidates for admission/graduates was 67,7%, if

one takes into account all secondary school graduates and 73,6% of the graduates with the maturity certificate.

All available places in Polish universities are taken, but sometimes it appears difficult to find enough candidates for all available places in such faculties as physics, chemistry, agriculture and some technical fields. The authorities of each university (senate, rector) decide upon the number of students that can be admitted, depending on the number of available scientific staff and the availability of lecture rooms.

IV. Challenges, problems and prospects

The long-term transformations of the secondary education system in Poland require:

- the promotion of foreign language teaching;

- the modernisation of teacher training;

- changes in syllabuses;

- the transformation of vocational training.

There are also, in the present transition period, two basic issues left that neither the Ministry of Education, nor teachers and educational researchers are very eager to put forward. First, the question as to what extent the state and its democratically elected – and to a certain degree accepted – institutions are able and entitled to lay out the main trends of educational reform.

The scope of this freedom is determined by the relation between the educational egalitarianism still espoused and expected by the majority in society on the one hand, and the pursuit of only those educational targets that are desirable from the state's point of view, on the other hand. The latter option implies non-interference and a low level of organisational and financial participation in educational activities, available, therefore, to a substantially smaller part of society.

Thus, on the one hand, a tutelar role of the state, which allows fulfilment of the broad educational aspirations of society and facilitates the enrolment of a considerable proportion of youth in particular types of schools. On the other hand, patronage and participation of the state only in some chosen fields of educational activities (such as those that are likely to further economic growth, policies in favour of the gifted and the like), a policy, in short, that is favourable to economic interests only.

Once the country's wealth has increased, the possibility of broadening educational patronage can be envisaged. Of course, such an approach supposes at least a partial revision of the school funding rules.

If there is a choice in favour of educational egalitarianism, the stress will be on attaining a common and, on the whole, lower quality of education; the functioning costs of the education system being in this case very high. "Elitism" on the contrary, means a smaller burden for the state budget, but stress on ensuring higher levels of educational attainment. These considerations are particularly relevant in the situation that prevails at present in all publicly funded activities. The brave postulate that "the money for education must be found" is good for nothing (by analogy, the same applies to health and social care, culture, budgets for defense, police, etc.). Either we accept a further increase in educational poverty, or we accept for the coming years a policy choice that privileges a selective and "elitist" education. For the duration of economic restructuring, a social agreement could be found that would allow suspending certain payments from the state budget for education. Such an agreement would have to be reached as a result of consultation between schools and parents. That it is possible is proved by the fact that it already works in many schools. In fact, since autumn 1991, many schools have already put such an agreement into practice.

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Appendix

Table 1: Enrolments in secondary education by type of school (1970-91)

	General secondary		Basic vocational		Technical		Total	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
1970	402	23,0	869	49,8	475	27,2	1 746	100
1975	472	24,0	910	46,3	583	29,7	1 965	100
1980	346	20,4	750	44,2	601	35,4	1 697	100
1985	338	21,1	767	48,2	487	30,6	1 592	100
1990	445	23,2	832	43,5	637	33,3	1 914	100
1991	499	25,4	795	40,5	671	34,1	1 965	100

Table 2: The curriculum of the upper primary school (grades 4 to 8, 1992/93)

Subject	Number of hours per week				
	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Polish language	6	5	5	5	5
Modern foreign language	-	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	5	4	4	4	4
Social studies	-	-	-	-	1
History	1	1	1	1	1
Geography	1 +1	1 +1	1 +1	1 +1	1 +1
Biology with hygiene	1	2	1	1	1
Physics	-	-	1 +1	1 +2	1 +2
Chemistry	-	-	-	1	1
Technology/computing					
Art	3	4	4	4	4
Music					
Physical education	3	2	2	2	2
Hours for class tutor	-	-	-	-	1
Hours for headmaster	1	1	1	1	1
Total	**21+1**	**22+1**	**22+2**	**23+3**	**25+3**
Compensatory activities	1	1	1	1	1

Table 3: The curriculum of the general secondary school (lyceum, 1992/93)

Subject	Number of hours per week			
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Polish language	4	4	4	4
First modern foreign language	5	5	5	3
Second or Latin				
Mathematics	3	3	2	2
Social studies	-	-	-	1 +2
History	1 +1	1 +1	1 +2	1
Geography	1	1	1	-
Biology with hygiene and environmental protection	1 +2	1 +2	1 +2	-
Physics with astronomy	1	1	1	-
Chemistry	2	1	-	-
Technology/computing	1 +1	2[1]	-	-
Art/music	1		-	-
Self-defence training	1	1[2]	-	-
Physical education	2	2	2	2
Hours for class tutor	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Hours for profil teaching	-	2	5	8
Total	**27.5**	**27.5**	**26.5**	**23.5**

1. One of the two subjects must be chosen

2. For boys it can be organised as a one-week holiday camp

Table 4: The curriculum of the basic vocational school (1992/93)

Subject	Number of hours per week		
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Polish language	3	2	2
Modern foreign language	2	2	2
Mathematics	2	2	2
Self-defence training	1	1[1]	-
Physical education	2	2	2
Social studies	-	-	1
History	3[2]	2[2]	-
Physics			-
Protection and shaping of the environment			-
Hours for class tutor	0.5	0.5	0.5
Hours for headmaster	0.5	0.5	0.5
General subjects - total	14	12	10
Professional subjects (according to a profession)	9-4	7-5	8-3
Practical vocational training[3]	5-10	10-12	10-15
Total[3]	**28**	**29**	**28**

1 For boys it can be organised as a one-week holiday camp.
2 A school chooses two subjects in each grade.
3 For juvenile workers, the number of hours is increased (according to the Labour Code).

Table 5: The curriculum of the secondary technical school (1992/93)

Subject	Number of hours per week			
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Polish language	4	4	4	3
Modern foreign language	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	3	3	2	2
Introduction to computer science[1]	-	2	(2)	-
Self-defense training	1	1[2]	-	-
Physical education	2	2	2	2
Social studies	-	-	-	1
History Physics Protection and shaping of the environment Geography	4	4	4	-
Hours for class tutor	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Hours for headmaster	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
General subjects - total	17	19	15	13
Professional subjects (according to a profession)	6	5-3	8-6	10-4
Practical vocational training	5	5-7	5-7	5-11
Total	**28**	**29**	**28**	**28**

1. If a school employs a qualified teacher and has a computer laboratory.
2. For boys it can be organised as a one-week holiday camp.
3. A school chooses two subjects in each grade.

Table 6: Number of teachers and the structure of teachers' education

	Numbers of teachers	% of teachers trained in		
		Higher education	Teacher training courses	Secondary schools
General secondary schools				
1975	26 329	89,3	8,5	2,2
1980	21 795	97,3	2,1	0,6
1984	21 741	97,8	1,1	1,1
1988	23 284	97,7	1,2	1,1
Secondary technical schools[1]				
1975	37 218	74,5	15,3	10,2
1980	33 327	87,1	8,9	4,0
1984	56 155	80,4	10,7	8,9
1988	40 963	89,8	4,4	5,8
Basic vocational schools				
1975	36 876	41,1	33,8	25,1
1980	32 086	59,8	27,3	12,9
1984	28 171	78,1	12,4	9,5
1988	35 343	69,9	13,7	16,4

1. Includes teachers in two-year, post-secondary vocational schools

Table 7: Numbers of pupils taking foreign languages ('000, 1990/91)

Type of school	English	French	German	Russian	Latin	Other
Primary	263,3	40,3	192,3	2 133,4	0,4	0,8
Basic vocational	19,7	3,4	42,3	679,2	0,0	0,0
General secondary	233,4	72,0	195,8	279,8	36,1	3,4
Secondary technical	111,3	31,6	197,8	456,0	27,7	0,2
Total	627,7	147,3	628,2	3 648,4	64,2	4,4

Table 8: Percentage of pupils taking foreign languages, 1990/91 and 1986/87 (figures in brackets)

Type of school	English	French	German	Russian	Latin	Other
Primary	5,1	0,8	3,7	41,0	0,0	0,0
	(0,9)	(0,3)	(1,2)	(46,5)	(-)	(-)
Basic vocational	2,4	0,4	5,3	85,0	0,0	0,0
	(0,2)	(-)	(-)	(68,0)	(-)	(-)
General secondary	52,6	16,2	44,1	85,6	8,1	0,1
	(44,5)	(16,9)	(38,2)	(99,9)	(8,4)	(0,3)
Secondary technical	17,5	5,0	31,7	73,0	4,5	0,0
	(12,5)	(5,0)	(27,1)	(92,1)	(4,7)	(-)
Total (1990/91)	8,8	2,1	8,8	50,9	0,9	0,1

Table 9: Some information on the efficiency of secondary education

	Graduates	Pupils in grade 1	Repeaters (all grades)	Drop-out pupils (all grades)
	General secondary schools			
1970	66 000	119 500	13 400	7 300
1975	107 300	120 100	12 400	9 600
1980	82 500	89 900	6 000	6 000
1985	73 200	97 100	6 700	5 400
1990	87 000	132 600	6 000	6 100[1]
	Secondary technical schools			
1970	85 700	132 600	17 800	15 900
1975	115 600	165 200	12 800	16 600
1980	122 600	157 200	10 300	19 600
1985	93 500	138 900	9 300	12 400
1990	106 000[1]	180 300	11 800	16 700[1]
	Basic vocational schools			
1970	261 000	393 600	16 100	65 100
1975	304 600	378 900	15 700	38 100
1980	248 000	306 400	12 600	27 800
1985	224 200	296 400	15 300	23 900
1990	239 300[1]	305 600	16 200	37 900[1]

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The aim of this series is to make accessible to the public not only a systematic and coherent exposition of the educational systems and traditions in all signatory states to the European Cultural Convention, but also to outline the essential problems these systems are facing at the present time.
Each book has been written by an expert from the country concerned on the basis of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was drawn up by Denis Kallen who has both co-ordinated the series and undertaken the editing of each text in collaboration with the author.
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